

Western Cuyahoga Audubon Society
Board Minutes
Monday, January 20, 2014
Berea Library, Berea, Ohio

Present: Kit Birch, Nora Ebie, Liz Clingman, Mark Hofelich, Nancy Howell, Kurt Miske, Penny O'Connor, Mary Anne Romito, Tom Romito, Stan Searles

The meeting was held at the Berea Library, as a vehicle crashed into Sandwich Delites the night before.

1. Finances: Nancy Howell distributed a summary of chapter finances. There is \$28, 102.45 in the treasury. National Audubon Society dues share arrived in December: \$2,583. Annual Appeal contributions continue to come in. Major expenses were Christmas Bird Count Dinner and rental of the Zoo auditorium for the March joint "friendraiser" with Greater Cleveland Audubon and Kirtland Bird Club.

2. Updates:

a) Lost Bird Project Joint Program: Event will be on Sunday, March 9, 2014. WCAS has paid the room rental and will get reimbursement from Greater Cleveland Audubon and Kirtland Bird Club. Nancy would like for the three groups to meet one more time to finalize arrangements. Nancy presented food choices and prices from Aramark, the Zoo's caterer. There is a continental breakfast choice which provides a variety of hot and cold beverages, muffins, pastries, etc. for \$8.95 per person, a better deal than ala carte for beverages and snacks. Since the event is mid-afternoon, ordering for a smaller number of people would provide enough food, need not order for the full number of people. Stan Searles offered to work with Aramark on a workable food arrangement. Tom Romito is working with Marni Urso to have the event listed by National Audubon, and to have a convenient web-based RSVP.

b) Cleveland International Film Festival: Two members: Marti Burrows and Barbara Shagawat attended the previews. There were no films directly related to Audubon's mission. Suggestion was a film about "green" burials. This did not have much appeal. Tom observed that CIFF organizers will be at the Sundance Film Festival, and may return with more titles. He will ask if there are other options.

c) Dave Krasovic and Hog Island Audubon Camp: Dave received a scholarship in 2013, partly funded by WCAS. He will speak to the membership in May. He would like to go again. Board may want to give a scholarship to a young birder. Penny O'Connor observed that as Dave is a teacher, the experience benefits his students.

d) Buzzard Day and EarthFest: Penny will compose an item for the newsletter asking for member volunteers to staff a WCAS table. Nancy will apply for a table and chairs at EarthFest. Cost of a 10x10 area is too high.

e) Annual Appeal thank you letters: Some were returned, contents did not match the envelope. Nancy will investigate. WCAS will explore options for streamlining future annual appeals.

f) Newsletter: Kurt Miske reports that requested changes are being made. Penny will rewrite the appeal for volunteers to include Social Media Content Creator.

3. Program at Cleveland Museum of Natural History on the impact of Climate Change on Birds, February 19: Tom noted that the speaker will be National Audubon's chief scientist Gary Langham Ph.D. Would like to have a good turnout from WCAS. The program is sponsored by Greater Cleveland Audubon Society. Will send an e-blast.

4. Climate Change campaign and interview with Tom: National Audubon wanted to touch bases with strong chapters on how to promote this campaign. Tom suggested that National Audubon Society prepare a 30-second "elevator speech" that could cover the main points briefly in front of a meeting.

5. Background checks for interacting with youth on field trips: Tom reported that the topic came up at the Northeast Ohio Young Birder event January 11. Mark Hofelich observed that these can be done through insurance. Suggested that it be as needed. The key is no one-on-one contact between adult leader and youth. Leaders may need a background check for events with young people. People who show up do not. Issue of representing the group. Will contact other organizations (for example, Girl Scouts) to see how they handle this issue.

6. Second meeting of Ohio Audubon Chapters at the Grange Insurance Audubon Center in Columbus: Nora Ebie reported that it will be February 22-23. Gary Langham will be speaking the evening of February 22, on the climate change campaign. Hoping to have representatives for all chapters and provide lodging for overnight stay. Nora will check whether there will be a block of rooms reserved and paid by Audubon, or whether representatives must pay their own expenses and submit bills.

7. Social Media content creators needed: Nora would like to have content creators for Facebook, Twitter and more. Mary Anne observed that she would like to be able limit the flood from social media. Board suggested involving members. Will put an item in the newsletter. May also make a request for volunteers at meetings.

8. Future direction of WCAS: Would like a conservation project. Stan noted that the subject of climate change is vast, would be better to have a more focused project. Nancy would like to see WCAS continue to foster partnerships with other groups. She noted that West Creek has some opportunities. Metroparks is a possibility.

Kurt proposed that WCAS take Tom Romito up on his offer to do fundraising. May be able to streamline the Annual Appeal process. Mark Hofelich noted that in the short run, money can be saved by asking only previous donors. In the long run, this is not productive, because no new donors will be found. Nora noted that people may sometimes hold the request until they are in a better position to donate. Mark noted that fundraising is important for maintaining the long-term viability of an organization. By making more money, we become more comfortable spending money. Mark suggested forming a "Development Committee." Tom asked what should be the timeline for this activity. Nancy asked if this should be just from the Board or from the membership. Mark suggested starting with the Board and promoting at a future membership meeting. Stan observed that the March meeting will involve two other organizations, so it would not be in March. Tom suggested that April will be soon enough to start, and the work can span several months. "Time is on our side..."

Tom and Mark will work on the Development Committee.

9. Other WCAS business:

a) Tom Romito will be the featured speaker at the February 5 Kirtland Bird Club meeting at the Cleveland Museum of Natural History. He will reveal some new findings from the WCAS IBA data.

b) Liz will turn over creation of the agenda to Nora.

10. Next Board Meeting will be Monday, February 17, 2014 at 6 p.m. Tom will explore possibilities for a meeting place if Sandwich Delites has not yet reopened.